

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please incorporate the following amendments to respective claims of the above-referenced application. In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121, a claim listing including the status and text of all claims (as currently amended) appears below. In making these amendments, no new matter is added.

1. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1), especially for communication services, comprising:

At least one database (7) for storage and retrieval of data preferably formed as a server,

a plurality of clients communicating with the at least one database (7), ~~and~~/or at least one application server with accompanying clients, the server communicating with the at least one database (7), and

an appropriate framework (10),

wherein relevant services corresponding to desired customer care or billing processes are offered to the system user, characterized in that

the system (1) comprises a distributed component architecture including components (5) attributed in correspondence to the relevant services offered, wherein the components (5) are able to communicate with each other directly via interfaces.

2. (Original) Customer care and billing system (1) according to claim 1, characterized in that the system (1) is divided into at least two hierarchically arranged layers with increasing degree of abstraction wherein any lower layer isolates the above layer from the lower layers so that details of implementations of the lower layers are hidden from the layers above.

3. (Original) Customer care and billing system (1) according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the system (1) is divided into at least two hierarchically arranged tiers corresponding to technical tasks wherein the combined elements of all tiers together completely fulfill the tasks from the storage to the presentation of data.

4. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to

~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 3~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a lowest base layer (40) containing fundamental system behavior.

5. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 4~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a common layer (42) located above the base layer (40) containing abstractions of classes of the base layer (40) and classes that provide common facilities for all layers and tiers.

6. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 5~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a technical services layer (44) located above the common layer (42) providing software-related technical services.

7. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 6~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises an application layer (46) located above the technical services layer (44) combining the services of the technical services layer (44) in an abstract application and allowing mechanisms for description of the elements of the domain tier (58) on a meta-level.

8. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 7~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a business layer (50) located above the application layer (46) containing the domain-specific classes for each component (5).

9. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 8~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a presentation tier (52) implementing the presentation of data and the feasibilities of application for the user of the system (1).

10. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 9~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises an application tier (54) containing classes and interfaces that represent the application.

11. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 12~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a meta-application tier (56) containing classes that provide facilities to an application to describe aspects of itself.

12. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 11~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a domain tier (58) containing business object classes of a specific application domain.

13. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 12~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a persistence tier (60) representing a reproduction of the class model of the domain tier (58) into the data model of the at least one database (7) and supporting mechanisms for transaction-protected manipulation of data in the at least one database (7).

14. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 13~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises a meta-application dictionary containing information about one component (5), its classes and the attributes of these classes, and allowing the dynamic configuration of application information and processing on a meta-level.

15. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 14~~, characterized in that the system (1) comprises facilities (68) to make the server's interface model available on client side (70) and thus to hide the employed 20 communication technology from a client developer.

16. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 15~~, characterized in that the system (1) provides defined interfaces and mechanisms for inquiry distribution, so that multiple application server of the same kind can be added to the system (1).

17. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 16~~, characterized in that the system (1) provides the possibility of replacing or adding components (5).

18. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 17~~, characterized in that classes can be extended and/or new classes can be added to vary a component during processing by using meta-application facilities.

19. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims ~~1 to 18~~, characterized in that the database (7) comprises a plurality of

independent database sections (12) and/or multiple independent databases (12) exist, wherein each of the independent database sections and/or the independent databases (12) only communicate with one component (5).

20. (Currently Amended) Customer care and billing system (1) according to ~~one of~~ claims 1-~~to~~ 19, characterized in that the system (1) provides mechanisms to allow transaction and memory management distributed over components (5).